10: d'Orleans--263-264 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 276, 301, 563, 777 Ethnic subgroups

"The boatmen [LSS: Kha from Laos] replace the waterpipe used on the Black River by the cigarette, which they put behind the ear after a few whiffs. They also chew betel. I remark that the majority of them wear a bracelet, made of two threads, on the right wrist. They tell us that it is a talisman--a kind of [264] luck charm, which is given to them when they leave their village to navigate or trade."

10: d'Orleans--321 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 438, 777, 831, 842

[LSS: in the market of Luang Prabang] "There are amulets, wild boar tusks, pyrites, and fossils rolled up in thin silver thread, some of these latter being supposed to possess the power of fecundation, while others are obscene."

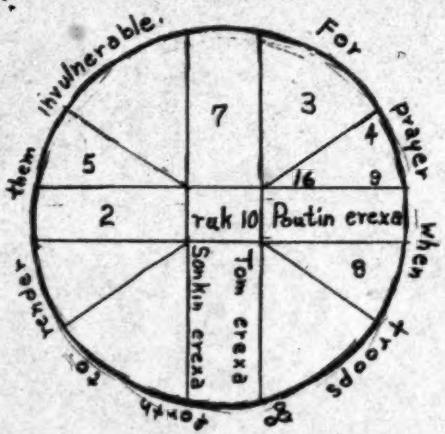
10: d'Orleans--338-339 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 346, 777

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "There are several other pagodas at the far end of the town to be visited, including that of Ouate Sieng Tong, in which we notice a large banner on which are depicted a series of circles representing the march of Buddha. True believers can see upon these banners the footprints of the god, and these figures reproduced upon the coats of the soldiers are regarded as a talisman.

Among the accessory monuments in the courtyard is a small pyramid partly covered with blades of silver or copper and bearing a Laotian inscription, which, as the interpreter tells me, informs passers-by [339] that the bones of a mandarin named Tianone are laid to rest inside it, and the edifice is surrounded by pillars, surmounted by lotus flowers and looking very much like large asparagus."

10; d'Orleans--340-343 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-1-2
116, 173, 346, 777, 782

"Behind the altar [LSS: of the pagoda of Ouate Uisoune in Luang Prabang] is a semi-circular black stone upon a wooden pedestal and covered with Laotian inscriptions. Upon one side of this stone, it is related how the king of Muong Hay (near Muong Yan), having come for a festival with the king of Luang Prabang, left in the pagoda images of Buddha and books made of palm branches about 1198. The date is 1198 after Tiaoman Ta, who is supposed to have lived sixty-six centuries ago, so that it is one difficult to verify. Upon the reverse is a cabalistic sign which, worn by a soldier on the [pages 341 and 342 contain illustration] [343] breast, renders him invulnerable. This sign is as follows:-



10: d'Orleans--340-343 T-3 (1891-92) 1894
116, 173, 346, 777, 782

The figures are in Laotian.
Ruk is an invocation to the gods.
Poutin erexa means (Pra god) pout, protect me.
Tom (in) erexa means (Teonda god) protect me.
Sonkin erexa means, bonzes protect me.
In this, as in the other temples are to be found the con
pit, the sunshades, the divinities which lay hands on the
the Buddhas with clasped hands (Pra Hopokoute), while i
recent construction are twenty rows of small gilt Buddha
against the wall."

uit for the holy water, the pul-
aithful, the adorned gods and
the adjoining pagoda of more
placed close beside one another

346 Pagodas are always built on ground which has been perfectly leveled, is quite extensive and is surrounded by a wooden palisade or brick wall of elbow height.

[485] Within the pagoda enclosures there are bonzeries and dependent structures to serve as quarters for the bonzes, schools for their pupils and hostelries for travelers.

735 The construction and upkeep of pagodas are entirely dependent on
346 the generous liberality of the faithful. Thus these edifices can be used as a criterion for discovering both the state of prosperity of a region and the religious faith of its inhabitants.

[778] As used to be the case for our churches, Laotian pagodas and even their enclosures are, according to the customs of the land, sanctuaries which confer immunity against legal prosecution for certain crimes and misdemeanors.

[527] It is also in the enclosure and sometimes under the cloisters and verandas of the pagodas that the inhabitants gather on the legal holidays, and also private holidays, which are known as "Ngans".

844 Childbirth. Dr. Estrade describes the delivery of a woman of southern Laos as follows. The preliminaries, the operation itself and post-delivery procedure are the same, with only slight differences in detail, in northern Laos, and we may therefore quote Dr. Estrade's description as applicable to all of Laos in general.

"Childbirth never takes place in the house inhabited by the pregnant woman or her direct relatives, but always in the home of a neighbor or distant relative who gives hospitality to the patient until she is up and about again. The duration of pregnancy is counted in moons, as in all calculations of time, the moon being the essential element for the Laotian in the measurement of time and the occurrence
• 777 of a great many phenomena. When a woman reaches the last moon of her pregnancy she takes certain precautions all tending to delay
821 delivery until the first phase of the new moon, since births during the last phases are signs of misfortune [189] such as the death of the child,
[782] deformity, etc. These prejudices have such force that parents are careless in caring for any child born during the last phases of the moon, and in such a case all of their effort goes into prayers, offerings to the bonzes and the making of votive offerings (1)

(1) This assertion should not, however, be taken too literally or in any general sense. This is a prejudice which is kept up by the bonzes in their own self-interest, and is easy to see through. (Author's note.)

tigers; 784

--to eat lying down, for fear of turning into a snake; a story told to encourage children to hold themselve well while eating;

--to eat the liver and the gizzard of the chicken, for fear of becoming mad; a story to make children leave, to the adults, all that is good on a dish;

--to open one's strong-box or one's small box for locking up money, jewels or other valuable objects, during the night; wealthy persons who did not observe this rule would soon become poor;

--and finally, to put an end to this long enumeration, there is the interdict to a married couple to sleep in the same bed on the birthday of one of the marriage partners.

I leave you the trouble, Ladies and Gentlemen, to think about these beliefs.

Among us a wedding present consisting of jewels or of silver plate may be of an uneven number. But where bank notes or objects of lesser importance are concerned, the number must always be even. 784 /801/

Certain superstitions come close to French superstitions. For instance: a buzzing in the ears signifies: "Somebody is saying something bad about me somewhere." In Laos if someone drops his bowl of rice while eating, this has the same significance. The buzzing in the ears means that the phi (demon) asks you for the way but that you do not deign to answer. That is why you get a hard box on the ear. Then you must answer him: "Thang louang nok ban!" (Follow the great road which passes in front of the house). An itch in the ears means that it is going to rain. 787

Another French superstition which has passed into a proverb is: "Lucky at cards (play), unlucky in love." Laotians are more fortunate, for they do not have this belief. Among us one can be lucky at play and at the same time lucky in love. 777

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sebaceous scum of the fetus and so make the birth easier. She should 843
wash her hair from time to time with water in which she has soaked an eel's tail [53] and some rice. She takes hold of the eel's tail to tie her hair. This will result in the head of the fetus becoming more slippery, and the birth will become easier.

If the pregnant woman has to protect herself from spirits, it must 843
not be forgotten that certain of her actions may be disastrous to those 777
around her. She must not enter a new house for fear of attracting ill fortune to its owner. She must not attend a wedding for she would bring ill luck to the new couple. The husband of the pregnant woman loses a part of his khouan (see above). He also becomes unfortunate in hunting and in games of chance.

The Delivery. This cannot take place in the house of the 844
woman brought to bed, otherwise the greatest misfortune would descend on the owner of the building. Sometimes the parents have a cabin built where the woman giving birth will spend the whole time of her delivery.

When the woman feels the first pains, all objects that are fastened or hooked on, such as earrings, are removed. She keeps only her skirt on and remains sitting during the whole time of her labor. Opposite her hangs a cord to which she holds on at the moment of birth, for this position will facilitate the descent of the fetus. If the birth is prolonged, decoctions and liniments are used to help the operation.

At the time of expulsion, the newly born is left between the legs of its mother until the delivery. It is only when the placenta has emerged, that the cord is cut with a bamboo blade. If it were cut with a steel blade, the child would run the risk of meeting a violent death. The thread used for tying the cord on girls is taken from a spinning wheel, so that later she will become a good spinner. The placenta is usually buried under one of the stairways of the house [54] otherwise the fertility of the parents would run the risk of drying up.

After the Delivery. After the delivery, the woman who 846
has given birth sits on a bed of finely pulverized kitchen salt, so that the after effects may be normal. Than she takes a hot bath and changes her clothes. After that begins for her the You Kam "to submit to penitence."

She lies down on a low bed placed against a large clay hearth of the same size as the bed, on which is a large caldron used to prepare a decoction of aromatic or medicinal plants to be put into the sitz baths and hot body affusions which she must have frequently.